

A  
PROPOSAL  
Humbly Offered  
FOR THE  
FARMING  
OF  
LIBERTY  
OF  
CONSCIENCE.

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Printed in the Year , 1663.

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# A Proposal Humbly offered for the Farming of Liberty of Conscience

**S**Ince nothing can be dearer unto poor Christians than Liberty, or the free exercise of their Judgements and Conscience, which hath kindled that fire in the bowels of the three Kingdoms, which all the precious blood that hath been shed, during those late Troubles, hath not been able totally to extinguish: And since many of us, whose names are affixed, were so profitable instrumental in those late Combustions, as appears all along in our Sermons before the Honourable House of Parliament, in the Years 1642. 43. 44. 45. 46. in exciting the good people of this Nation, to seek and maintain their Christian Liberty against all Pretheicall and Antichristian Imposition wheresoever. And considering that the Little Finger of Apostasy from our first Love, would be a greater burden upon our tender Conscience than the Loyns of Episcopacy. We being more bound in Honour than Conscience, cannot totally desist; neither need any man fear, or so much as suppose, that any inconveniente or alteration should happen in Religion, by the great diversity of Opinions, Tongues, and Languages, tolerated amongst us, unless in the great *Babel* of Episcopacy, that may possibly be pulled down and destroyed by this our notable Coofusion. For if the Gospel were wholly dissevered, and spread abroad by every man speaking in his own Language, and the very Endites thereof affounfied, and miraculously wrought in to a belief of it: how is it likely to be now obstructed in the free exercise of our Spiritual Gifts, with these our cloven and devided Tongues. And since many worthy (Persons) from whom we might little expect it, but far less deserve it, out of their goodness and clemency, are pleased to endue to some Liberty, did not some Persons, Aliens and Strangers to the Common-wealth of *Israel*.

take up a reproach against us, as Persons reprobated into a unprofitable submission to the principle of Separation, and to the Church of State, never favourable hitherto to some such consistency amongst our selves; The Ark of God having for twenty years together been exposed to by-wayes, streets, and worse places, for want of an agreement amongst our own Brethren where to rest us by how to constraint. If this is soe Case, and could we be sure of so much favour as *Saul* once desired of *Samuel*, that the Bishoppes would bethoufus before the people, We would in a private Christian way lay our hands upon our hearts, and acknowledge the hand of God, and the justice thereof, in turning us out of his Vineyard, as wicked and unprofitable Servantes, and to suffer the iniquity of our heels to overtake us; crying out with Reverend Mr. *Calamy*, *The Ark of God is justly departed from us*; but being yet thus assured, do hope the people will yet believe these to be only Bears-skins lapt about us by Episcopal hands: And therefore to the end that a Consistency, and Oneness, of Judgement of the whole separating Brethren, and their moderation may be known unto all men, and that the World may know that there is a Spirit of Rule and Government resting in us;

**I**t is humbly proposed that the Sole Power of granting Licences and Indulgences for Liberty of Conscience, within the Kingdom of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick, may be vested in the Persons under named for the term of seven years, under the Farm Rent of an Hundred Thousand Pounds per Annum, to Commence from the twenty fifth day of March next, under such Rates and Qualifications as are hereafter specified.

**The**



The Names of the Grand Commissioners and Farmers of *Liberty of Conscience*; proposed on yesterday, being Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1662. being the day of a private Fast, kept by Mr. Calamy, Mr. Baxter, and others, at Mr. Beal's house, near my Lord of Ely's Chappel in Holborn.

Mr. Edmond Calamy  
Mr. Tilham, late of Colchester.  
Mr. Philip Nye  
Mr. Peake  
Mr. Stanley of Dorchester.  
George Fox, Executor of the last Will and Testament of James Naslor deceased.  
Doctor Lazarus Seaman  
Mr. Dell, late of Cambridge.  
Doctor Owen  
Mr. Bryan, late of Coventry.  
Mr. Matthew Mead  
Mr. John Coppin  
Doctor Manton  
Mr. Kiffen

The Executor of Mr. Venner, lately Executed.  
Mr. Thomas Care  
Mr. Reynor, late of Lincoln.  
Mr. Ralph Venning  
Mr. Rogers  
Mr. Benn, late of Dorchester.  
Mr. George Griffith, late of Charter-house.  
The Executor of Hugh Peters, lately Executed.  
Mr. George Newton, late of Taunton.  
Mr. Dan. Dyke, late of Hertfordshire.

Mr.

Mr. William Jenkins  
 Mr. Fisher, late of Kent.  
 Doctor Thomas Godwin  
 Mr. Hammond, late of New-  
 castle.  
 Mr. Peter Sterry  
 Mr. Bridges, late of New-  
 mouth.  
 Mr. Joseph Carroll  
 Mr. Tomber, late of Leth-  
 ster.  
 Mr. Leigh, late of Lombard-  
 street.

Mr. Mayo, late of Kingston.  
 Mr. John Spring.  
 Mr. Henry Jiffey.  
 Mr. Newcomen of Dedham in  
 Essex.  
 Doctor Tasker of Cam-  
 bridge.  
 Doctor Cornelius Burges  
 Mr. Barber Croft  
 Doctor Holmes  
 Mr. John Evans  
 Mr. Thomas Brooks.

That the Persons aforesaid may be constituted Grand Commissioners, and Farmers of Liberty of Conscience within the Kingdom of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick, and may be impowered to set up one publick Office within the City of London, and to nominate and elect a convenient number of Registers Clerk, and other Officers: And for the more certainty of all Certificates to be granted as is hereafter appointed, The said Grand Commissioners and Farmers may form a common Seal to be known, and called by the common name of *The Publicke Seal of the Grand Commissioners and Farmers of Liberty of Conscience* engraven, *An Ass without Ears*, Braying, with this Motto encircled *Stat pro ratione libertas*: And the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, or any 24. of them in the said Office assembled, may from time to time, compound and agree for *Liberty of Conscience*, with any person or persons, under such Rates and Qualifications; as are hereafter specified.

That the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, or any 24. of them, may constitute and appoint, under the Publicke

Publique Seal of the Office, Sub-Commissioners, and other Officers, for every County within the said Kingdom, not exceeding the number of 12. for each County, whereof 7. to be a *Quarterm*, who may compound and agree for *Liberty of Conscience*, with any person or persons, select Congregations, Cities, Towns Corporate, Parishes, Hamlets, and Villages, by the great, or otherwise, within their respective Countries, not exceeding the Rates hereafter mentioned.

# Rates to be observed in all Compositions for Liberty of Conscience.

	<i>Per Annum.</i>
A Presbyterian Minister	5 0 0
A Ruling Elder	4 0 0
A Deacon	3 0 5
A Hearer Male or Female in Fellowship to all Ordinances	2 0 0

A Common Hearer only	6 0 0
An independent Pastor	5 0 0
A Teaching Elder	4 0 0
A Helper in Government	3 0 0
A Deacon	3 0 0
A Hearer male or female in Fellowship to all Ordinances	2 1 0 0
A common Hearer only	1 0 0
A Baptist admitted to the administration of all Ordinances	5 0 0
A Preaching assistant	4 0 0
An Elder in Office	3 0 0
A Deacon	3 0 0
A Hearer in Fellowship male or female to all Ordinances	2 0 0
A common Hearer only	1 0 0
A Fifth Monarcher admitted to hold forth	5 0 0
An Elder under the same administration	3 0 0
A Deacon under the same administration	3 0 0
A Hearer male or female in Fellowship ac- cording to the value of his or her Estate	2 s. per l. per annum.
A common Hearer male or female accord- ing to the value of his or her Estate e.d.	4 0 0
per l. per annum.	3 0 0
A speaking male Quaker	4 0 0
A speaking female Quaker	3 0 0
A common Quaker male or female	2 0 0

A Confessor	6	0	0
A Seminary or Mass-Priest at large	5	0	0
A private Mass-Priest	4	0	0
A Roman Catholick in any other Order	3	0	0
A Roman Catholick not in order Male or Female	1	0	0

An Officer under any Administration not mentioned in the rates aforesaid being a Native of *England*, such only excepted as stand Conformable to the Church of *England* 5 0 0  
 A common person under any Administration not mentioned in the rates aforesaid being a Native of *England*, such only excepted as stand conformable to the Church of *England* 3 0 0

An Officer under any Administration whatsoever not a Native of *England*, except conformable to the Church of *England* 10 0 0  
 A private person under any Administration whatsoever not a Native of *England*, except conformable to the Church of *England* 5 0 0

*Rates to be observed in compounding for Liberty of Conscience in the particulars following, viz.*

For Liberty to assert the Popes Supremacy	10	0	0
For Liberty to write, speak, or Preach against the Government as they shall be inwardly moved	5	0	0
For liberty to keep on their Hats before Magistrates, or in Courts of Judicature	2	0	0
For liberty to rail publicly against the Bishops and Common Prayer	1	0	0
For liberty to refuse all manner of Oaths, of Allegiance	B		

ince and Supremacy, or in cases Civil or Cri- minal	2 0 0
For liberty to deny Tythes and other Church Duties	1 0 0
For liberty to expound the Revelations and the Book of Daniel	1 0 0
For liberty to disturb any Congregation after Sermon	0 10 0
For liberty to assert the Solemn League and Co- venant	1 5 0
For liberty to instruct youth in the short Cate- chism let forth by the Assembly of Divines	0 10 0

That any person or persons gisted for any the Particulars abovesaid, may have liberty therein, either as an *Itinerant*, in private or publique, at the Rates abovesaid.

That no person or persons be admitted to compound for *Liberty of Conscience*, until he or they have first taken and subscribed to the Solemn Protestation following, before the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, or their Sub-Commissioners respectively.

I A. B. do here solemnly protest, That I judge my self still bound by the Solemn League and Covenant, by the Engagement, by private Church-Covenant, or by any other Oath which I have taken ever since the year 1641. and that so far as with safety to my person and Estate I may, I will endeavour the utter extirpation of Episcopacy, and to the utmost of my power will abet and promote all Schism, faction, and discord, both in Church and State, according to the best form and manner, prescribed and laid open in the Sermons of many of the Grand Commissioners and Farmers, before the Parliament appointed to be Printed, and now called the Homilies of the separated Churches. And that I will never by what Conviction of Authority soever, whether legal or Episcopal, ever consent to the Establish Doctrine and discipline of the Church of England.

And I do likewise believe, That Liberty of Conscience, was a Mysterious, yet profitable talent committed to the Churches, and that it may be lawfully claimed out for advantage and improvement.

That

That no person within the Kingdom of *England*, Dominion of *Wales*, or Town of *Berwick*, may, from, and after the twenty fifth day of *March* next, use or exercise any manner of *Liberty of Conscience*, except persons standing conformable to the Church of *England*, untill such person or persons shall first take the Solemn Protestation, and shall compound with the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, for *Liberty of Conscience*, nor shall he be admitted or permitted to be a Speaker or Hearer, in any Meeting or Assemblies whatsoever.

That the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers of *Liberty of Conscience*, may have power to constitute under the Publick Seal of the said Office, a convenient number of Spiritual Gagers, who may have and exercise all such Powers, Priviledges, and Authorities, as the Gagers for Excise of Beer and Ale, have, or ought to have and enjoy, and may at any time, in case of Suspition, enter into any house or place, publick or private, to Gage and try the Spirits and Affections of any person or persons; And by Praying, Preaching, or other good Exhortation, dissuade from Episcopacy, and the Common-Prayer, the better to fit and prepare them to compound for *Liberty of Conscience*.

That the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, of *Liberty of Conscience*, may have power to fine any person or persons ( not exceeding the sum of twenty pound for every offence, who shall after Composition for *Liberty of Conscience*, and subscribing the *Solemn Protestation*, be present in any Church or Chappel, within the Kingdom of *England*, Dominion of *Wales*, and Town of *Berwick*, in the time of any part of Divine Service, unless at the Funeral of his Father, or some other like occasion, he shall either respond, be uncovered, or carry himself reverently, in the time of Divine Service aforesaid.

That the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers of  
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*Liberty of Conscience*, or any twenty four of them assembled at the Office aforesaid, may have and exercise a Jurisdiction of Appeal in all matters relating to *Liberty of Conscience*, within the said Kingdom of *England*, and shall have a conclusive power in all matters brought before them, by way of Appeal as aforesaid.

That for the better management of all such matters as shall be brought judicially before the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers of *Liberty of Conscience*, by way of Appeal the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, shall have power to constitute and appoint Mr. *Oliver St. Johns*, and such others as they judge fit for their said Service, to be of Standing-Council with the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers: And the said Mr. *Oliver St. Johns*, being so constituted and appointed under the Publick Seal of the said Office, shall, and may be exempted and discharged from being in any Publick Office, or place of Trust or Profit, for the said term of seven Years, any thing to the contrary notwithstanding.

That if any person or persons shall happen to be proceeded against in any of the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Bishops of this Kingdome for Contumacy, for Non-Conformity, for non-payment of Tythes, and other Church-Duties, for publick rayling against the Bishops, the Common-Prayer, or the Goverment of the Church of *England*, or shall speak Opprobriously or Scandalously against the Doctrine or Discipline thereof, as Antichristian, or shall maintain any Positions or Doctrines contrary thereto: Every such person producing a Certificate from the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers under the publick Seal of the said Office, that such person or persons are under Composition for *Liberty of Conscience*, shall actually be discharged, and all further proceedings stayed; Any thing to the contrary notwithstanding.

That if any persons shall happen to be Indicted or Criminally

minally proceeded against in any of His Majesties Courts at Westminster, or elsewhere within the Kingdom of England, either for Treasonable Speeches or Practices, for publick rayling at the Government, or for Scandalous words against either or both Houses of Parliament, or for Transgressing any of the Penal Laws and Statutes of this Kingdom; Every such person or persons, producing a Certificate from the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers under the publick Seal of the said Office, that such person or persons are under Composition for *Liberty of Conscience*; and that such words or practices were not spoken or acted *maliſe*, but were only the natural and proper effects and product of Liberty of Conscience, shall be discharged, and all further proceedings stayed; Any thing to the contrary notwithstanding.

That the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers of Liberty of Conscience, may have power from time to time to ordain Pastors, Elders, and Deacons, or any other Officers under any Administration whatsoever, by the laying on of the publick Seal of the Office: Which said Imposition of the said publick Seal being received with a Certificate, shall be as lawful an Ordination, as if every such person had received Imposition from the hands of the Presbytery, Any late Usage or Custom to the contrary notwithstanding.

That the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers may have power from time to time, to set apart dayes of publick Fastings, and Humiliation, and Thanksgiving; on which dayes it may be lawful for any person or persons appointed to Officiate before the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, to stir up the people to a holy Indignation against themselves, for having by their want of Zeal and Brotherly kindness one towards another, lost many precious enjoyments; and above all, the never to be forgotten Losse of the late Power and Dominion, which with the Expence of so much Blood and Rapine, was.

was put into the hands of the Saints. And to take up for a Lamentation, and great thoughts of heart, the Divisions of Ruben, That having our Sacks full, such an evill spirit should be found in the midst of us, as to fall out by the way; might it have been with those that abode by the Stuff, as with those that went out to the Battle, it had not been with us as at this day. Some starting aside like a broken Bow, in the Year 48. others continue to bear the burthen and heat of the day untill 60. being harness'd, did then turn their backs in the day of Battel; as was most sweetly handled at the Fast kept Yesterday at Mr. Beale's, by Mr. Calamy, Mr. Baxter, and others.

That the twentieth day of April next, commonly called *Easter-Munday*, be kept as a day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, for a Blessing upon these Gospel-----Under-takings, and that Mr. Edmond Calamy, Mr. Peter Sterry, Doctor Lazarus Seamon, and Mr. Feak, be desired to carry on the Work of the Day in Prayer and Preaching, before the said Grand Farmers, and that the particulars following, be recommended to their consideration in the Work of the Day.

1. To Bewail, { 1. All our Court Sins.  
2. Our Bishops Sins.  
3. Our Monk Sins.  
4. Our Common-Prayer Sins.

2. To Divert. { 1. Westminster-Hall Judgments.  
2. Our Old-Bayly Judgments.  
3. Our Tower-Hill Judgments.  
4. Our Charing-Cross Judgments  
5. Our Tyburn Judgements.

Lastly, For deliverance from the hand of *Dnn*, that uncircumcised Philistine.

That the said Grand Commissioners, and Farmers  
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of Liberty of Conscience, may have power to build Churches and Chappels in any place or places, except upon such Ground where Churches or Chappels do alreadie stand, in regard of the inconvenience of letting up Altar against Altar; And forasmuch as the custom of reading some part of the holy Bible before Sermon, commonly called 1st. & 2d. Lessons hath been found fruitless, That therefore the said Grand Commissioners & Farmers may have power to appoint instead thereof, the Annual reading of those Sermons preached by many of the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers, before the Parliament, Upon special Occasions of Thanksgiving and Humiliation, from the year 1641. to the year 1648. Which said Sermons may be called the Homilies of the separating Churches.

That the said Grand Commissioners and Farmers may have power to require Mr. *Gilbert Millington*, and Mr. *Luke Robinson*, the lame Evangelist, to deliver up all such Articles, Orders, Books, Papers, and other Writings, as were transacted before the late Committee for plundred Ministers; and likewise, all such as were passed and transacted before Mr. *Philip Ney*, and some others of the now Grand Commissioners and Farmers, and heretofore called Commissioners of Spiritual Tryars, to the end, the said Articles, Orders, Books, and other Papers may be printed and published, and may be kept at the said Office upon Record for ever, and appointed to be the Book of Canons of the separated Churches.

All this being done, we may upon Scripture grounds expect, that the door of hope may yet be open to Us, and our children after Us, to see the travel of our Souls, and to set Us into the promised Land, and to reap some of those clusters of the Grapes of *Canaan*, which with so much labour and toyl of body and mind were planted, especially in the years of 1641, 42, 43, 44, 45. by many of Us, and other precious Saints and Ministers of the Gospel, who are since fallen asleep, and have, We hope, reaped the Fruits of those labours, the Lord having in that day

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put a mighty Spirit into us, and set us as Watchmen upon the Towers of Tyre, to cry mightily, *Carew Mordaunt* & *ourselves* be worthy to the Lord's grace, that those nearest us, being labour of ours, mole have concerning him, & their Kingdom rising above those Old Islands, & putting about their Church-subverting labours, which foul-comounding labours of Ours, may at last be overcome, & may be witness'd with the point of a Diamond, upon the heart of the King, upon the hearts of the Bishops, upon the heart of those Prelates, and upon the hearts of all the people from Duntover to Tyre, & thus so in God's good time we may receive our Reward, seven-fold, according to our labours, & will the Generations to come, may hear, and do no more to wickedness.

Sobriety

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